

## Claims

[c1] A process for decontaminating mail in a mailbox comprising:  
receiving an indication to start a mail decontamination cycle; and  
commencing a decontamination cycle of a decontamination system.

[c2] The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing a hazard indication;  
beginning a timer;  
determining a safe condition; and  
providing an indication of the safe condition.

[c3] The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
locking the mailbox after providing the hazard indication; and  
unlocking the mailbox after providing the safe condition indication.

[c4] The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
detecting the presence of mail in the mailbox.

[c5] The method of claim 2 wherein the indication is provided to a remote location using a communications channel.

[c6] The method of claim 1 further comprising separating mail pieces in the  
~~mailbox.~~

*Sub P3* [c7] A mailbox system for decontaminating mail comprising:  
a door for allowing access to the interior of the mailbox; and  
a decontamination system operatively connected to a controller for decontaminating mail.

[c8] The mailbox of claim 7 further comprising:  
a controller having a timer for controlling a decontamination cycle;  
a power supply connected to the controller; and  
a display connected to the controller for providing indications.

[c9] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein,  
the door includes a lock operatively connected to the controller; and

the door provides a hermetic seal when closed.

[c10] The mailbox of claim 8 further comprising:  
means for detecting the presence of mail in the mailbox operatively connected to the controller for initiating the decontamination cycle.

[c11] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a soft-electron beam source.

[c12] ~~The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:~~  
~~the decontamination system includes a hard-electron beam source.~~

[c13] ~~The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:~~  
~~the decontamination system includes a x-ray source.~~

[c14] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a microwave source.

[c15] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a variable frequency microwave beam source.

[c16] ~~The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:~~  
~~the decontamination system includes an ultra violet light source.~~

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[c17] ~~The mailbox of claim 16 wherein:~~  
~~the decontamination system includes a variable frequency microwave beam source; and~~  
~~the mailbox includes dividers for exposing mail pieces to ultra violet light.~~

[c18] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine gas source.

[c19] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine dioxide gas source.

[c20] The mailbox of claim 19 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine dioxide evacuation chamber.

[c21] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes an ozone source.

[c22] The mailbox of claim 21 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a hopcolyte filter.

[c23] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a dry heat source.

[c24] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a super-heated steam source.

[c25] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the mailbox includes a separation frame for separating mail pieces.

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